

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 150918

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT TEHRAN 5718 ACTION STATE INFO ADDIS ABABA

ASMARA

CAIRO JIDDA MOGADISCIO MOSCOW KINSHASA

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 5718

ZVPH

PNMEYBKE.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, ET, IR, US

SUBJECT: ETHIOPIAN REQUEST FOR IRANIAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE

1. FOREIGN MINISTER KHALATBARY WHO HAD SUMMONED ME TO HIS HOME MORNING JULY 12 APOLOGIZED FOR DOING SO ON A HOLIDAY BUT SAID THAT HE HAD A MATTER OF SOME URGENCY TO DISCUSS. THIS RELATED TO A CONVERSATION THE SHAH HAD HAD THE PREVIOUS DAY WITH VISITING ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN MINISTER ZEWDE GEBRE-SELASSIE. GEBRE-SELASSIE TOLD THE SHAH THAT ETHIOPIA WAS BECOMING MUCH CONCERNED ABOUT DEVELOPMENT IN ERITREA AND ITS NEIGHBOR SOMALIA AND URGENTLY NEEDED MILITARY ARMS AS WELL AS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM ITS FRIENDS. IN THIS CONNECTION GEBRE-SELASSIE ALLUDED TO PODGORNYS IMMINENT VISIT TO SOMALIA WHICH HE INTERPRETED TO HAVE SINISTER AND ADVERSE IMPLICA-
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TIONS FOR ETHIOPIA.

2. THE SHAH REPLIED THAT A STABLE, SECURE ETHIOPIA WAS CERTAINLY CRITICAL TO THE WELL BEING OF THE AREA. HE ALSO AGREED THAT ANY EXTENSION OF SOVIET INFLUENCE IN THE AREA WOULD BE ALARMING. IN ANSWER TO GEBRE-SELASSIE'S DIRECT REQUEST FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE, HOWEVER, THE SHAH SAID THAT FRANKLY IRAN WAS NOT TOO WELL INFORMED ABOUT CURRENT CONDITIONS IN ETHIOPIA. HE SAID HE WOULD BE MOST CONCERNED FOR EXAMPLE IF HE WERE TO PROVIDE MILITARY EQUIPMENT WHICH MIGHT FALL INTO THE HANDS OF DISSIDENTS WITHIN THE COUNTRY. SINCE GEBRE-SELASSIE HAD TOLD HIM THAT ETHIOPIA WAS ALSO APPROACHING THE UNITED STATES AND SAUDI ARABIA, HE WOULD WANT TO CONSULT WITH US BEFORE MAKING A DECISION.

3. KHALATBARY SAID THAT HE HOPED WE AGREED THIS WAS A MATTER OF SOME URGENCY AND THAT WE WOULD PROVIDE OUR BEST ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA AND OUR VIEW AS TO WHETHER WE FELT IT WOULD BE WISE TO RESPOND TO ETHIOPIA'S REQUEST. PLEASE ADVISE. UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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